

STRIKING COMPARISONS. A REVIEW OF THE

treatment of the territories by two
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STRIKING COMPARISONS

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A REVIEW OF THE TREATMENT OF THE TERRITORIES BY THE TWO POLITICAL PARTIES.

It is only since the Laurier Government came into power that the North-West Territories have been dealt with by the Dominion authorities with that degree of fairness and justice to which they are entitled. Previous to 1896, the history of the North-West Territories is one of almost complete neglect, sub-governing powers being restricted, financial aid being inadequate, needed legislation and development being ignored. Since 1896, the West has received as much attention at the hands of the Dominion Government as any other part of Canada has, and the result has been a phenomenal development. It is an actual fact that the Territories did not have responsible government in the full meaning of the term until the Liberals came into power. In May, 1897, the very first session after coming into office, a Bill was introduced by Hon. Clifford Sifton to amend the law in that regard, and at the same time to extend the powers of the Territorial Assembly. Previous to this the Territories did not have a responsible executive council such as the Provinces have, but it had an Executive Committee, which was entirely a statutory body. This Bill took away the personal action of the Lieutenant-Governor, and made him act with the "advice and consent" of his council. At the same same time, the Territorial

Assembly was given power to deal with the qualifications of justices of the peace, the appointment of clerks in the courts of the Territories, they having been previously appointed by the Federal Government. The measure also gave the Assembly power to deal with local applications respecting road allowances, and power to incorporate local insurance companies.

That the changes in the law were important can be readily shown by quotations. Sir Charles Tupper, speaking in the Commons, on June 15th, 1897, (page 4115), said:

"On the contrary, we want to do steadily what I think this Act does, and the time has come when such an Act was required. It gives them power to deal with the local business of the North-West Territories to a greater extent than they were able to do before, but I do not think that it is calculated to increase the expenditure; it rather increases their legislative power in accordance with the wishes of the people."

A REVIEW OF THE TREATMENT OF THE TERRITORIES BY THE

Mr. N. F. Davin, speaking on the same day ("Hansard" of 1897, page 4115), said:

"I want to say a few words, which I did not say before lest I might delay the Bill. I am exceedingly glad to see this Bill go through. In 1888, when the Right Honorable Sir John Macdonald was where the Minister of Trade and Commerce now sits, he brought down a Bill to amend the North-West Territories' Act, and I gave notice of an amendment to that Bill that would have introduced then precisely the change which my hon. friend, the Minister of the Interior, has now happily introduced, and I congratulate him. I may, as a little piece of history, say what occurred. The leader of the then Government (Sir John Macdonald) resented my action, and withdrew his Bill, and brought down another Bill with a clause in it which will be found in the Act of 1888, by which he introduced into our Government what was called the Advisory Councils. I would not then speak on the Bill as there was no use trying to pass my amendment, and my respect for my great leader would not allow me to comment on that clause, and pour on it the ridicule it deserved; but I said to a friend of mine, when he asked me why I did not comment on it, 'It is a mere toy,' as it turned out to be. In consequence of pressure brought by myself on the Government, we had, a few years afterwards, an amendment, which introduced a different state of things, which introduced a committee of four to aid the Governor, but that committee of four is a very inconvenient piece of machinery, as the hon. gentleman knows, because, instead of being chosen by the Government, it was chosen by the Legislative Assembly. I BELIEVE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN a better plan to have had a committee of four chosen by the Governor, and made him act with the advice and consent of his council. At the same time the Territorial

A GOOD THING FOR THE TERRITORIES IF WE HAD HAD THIS LEGISLATION IN 1888, AND SUBSEQUENTLY IN 1891, WHEN ANOTHER CHANGE WAS MADE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH BETTER FOR THE TERRITORIES IF THIS CHANGE HAD BEEN MADE; so that, instead of having a nondescript Government, hampered in many ways, and with more power than a Government should have, more irresponsible than this Government which we now create will be, we should have had at once a stronger and more responsible Government, and my belief is that we should have made more progress than we have done. I am very glad to see this Bill launched to its third reading, and to see that we are going to have responsible government in the Territories."

FINANCIAL AID.

Perhaps the most important matter, as between the Dominion and the Territorial Governments, is that of financial grants to the Territories. An examination in regard to this matter shows in a striking way how much more fair and generous a spirit has animated the the Laurier Government than animated the Dominion authorities during the Conservative régime. This aspect of the situation was strikingly brought out in the House of Commons by Walter Scott, M.P. for Western Assiniboia, during the session of 1903. Mr. Scott said, in part:—

"I shall give to the House the demands made by the Territories for the past ten years for financial aid, and the proportion in which these demands have been acceded to each year:—

PERCENTAGE OF GRANT TO ESTIMATES PRESENTED.

	Amount asked.	Amount granted.	Percentage.
1892-93	368,723	195,700	53
1893... ..	368,723	199,200	54
1894... ..	403,640	225,534	55
1895... ..	375,640	267,534	71
1896... ..	387,800	242,879	62
1897... ..	400,000	282,879	70
1898... ..	438,000	282,879	64
1899... ..	535,000	282,879	53

(Yukon liquor licenses yielded \$160,000, spread over two years.)

1898 } \$973,000 { Grants \$565,768 {			
1899 } { Yukon 160,000 {	=	\$725,768	or 74
1900... ..	600,000	424,879	70
1901... ..	600,000	407,879	68
1902... ..	600,000	457,979	75
1903... ..	1,130,000	957,979	85

On the year 1899, the North-West Government collected \$160,000 on account of liquor licenses in the Yukon, and it was allowed to retain that money, which I believe it was entitled to. That spread the amount then collected over two years, and the real sums available by the North-West Government in 1898 and 1899 amounted to \$725,758, being 74 per cent upon the amount which they asked in these two years, which was an aggregate of \$973,000.

I have made a comparison also for periods of five years. We will call the first period the five Conservative years, because the Conservative Government was in power during those years, from 1892 to 1896, inclusive. The total estimate submitted here by the North-West Government, during those five years, aggregated \$1,904,526, and they were granted \$1,130,847, being 59 per cent of their estimates. The Liberal Government have been in power for seven years. In those seven years the estimates of the North-West Government have amounted to \$4,305,000, and they have been granted directly in cash, \$3,097,353, to which must be added the \$160,000 of Yukon liquor licenses, making a total of \$3,257,353, being 75 per cent, as against 59 per cent during the last five years; the Conservative Government were in power. To make the first five years; that the Liberal Government were in power from 1897 to 1901, inclusive, the total requisitions amounted to \$2,573,000, and the total grants amounted to \$1,841,495, being 71 per cent. Of the last five years of the present Government, from 1899 to 1903, inclusive, the estimates presented amounted to \$3,465,000, and upon these estimates they have been given \$2,691,995, being 77 per cent of the amounts asked for in those five years, as against 59 per cent in the last five years of the previous Government.

LANDS NOT TO PAY FOR G. T. P.

In connection with this subject, it is worth while calling attention to the denial given in the House of Commons by the Minister of Finance to the story faked up by the Conservatives, that the Dominion Government contemplated selling the public lands in the West to pay for the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific. The following is an extract from Hansard of September 24th, 1903, page 12320:—

Mr. CLANCY.—This may be a proper time to ask the Minister of Finance as to the correctness of the report that is current in the leading organs supporting the Government, that for the purpose of aiding in the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, or for other purposes of a similar kind, it is the purpose of the Government to set aside a quantity of land in the North-West Territories, to be sold for these purposes? I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if there is any foundation for that report.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE.—“It is a question of that kind

is contemplated.”
Mr. CLANCY.—“I am aware that there is no legislation of that character; I ask the hon. gentleman if that is the policy of the Government.”

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE.—“The policy of the Government for the present is as I have stated. I think the hon. gentleman will have to let the future take care of itself.”

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY.

It is also important that attention should be called to the fact that the Government, through the Minister of Finance, made a declaration in Parliament, that it would, at a very early date, take action in regard to the question of provincial autonomy. The following extract from page 1231 of Hansard, 1903, contains the declaration.

Mr. SPROULE.—“I think the Government ought to be prepared to give us some reason why they have been unable to grant the request of the Territories for provincial autonomy.”

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE.—“It is the great boast of our English system of government that it is a growth of time, and that, consequently, it is not well to do things too rapidly. Our development should be like that of British freedom, that broadens slowly down from precedent to precedent. It is not well to do these things with a hop, step and a jump. There has been some development of the principle of local self-government in the Territories during recent years. Under this present Government, amendments have been made in the legislation respecting the North-West Territories, which broadened the powers of the legislature, and gave the people a large measure of responsible government. I think the time is close at hand when this Government, which is always looking after these things wisely and well, will have to go further, and still further broaden these powers, and give to that section of the community, the larger measure of self-government which the other provinces enjoy. The conditions in the North-West Territories have not been the same as those in the older provinces in past years. But through the growth of population and the increase of settlements, they are rapidly assuming those conditions, and I am quite sure it will be the pleasure of both sides of this House, at a very early date, to extend the powers which have already been given.

SIR WILFRID LAURIER.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier also put himself on record as favoring early action in regard to the question of autonomy. His statement was made on account of Mr. Roche, of Marquette, claiming that by saying "Hear, hear" to certain remarks of Mr. Roche's, the Premier thereby endorsed the sentiment that the Territories need not expect autonomy at the hands of the present Government for many years. Upon Mr. Roche making the allegation in question, Sir Wilfrid made a straight denial. He said ("Hansard," page 13907):—

"If I said 'hear, hear,' it was not affirmation. On the contrary, it was negation."

But while the question of an advance on Capital Account was being discussed in Parliament, there were other declarations on the question of self-government for the Territories. Mr. Fielding, the Minister of Finance, for instance, said:—

"The time must be close at hand when it will be necessary, not only to revise the financial arrangements of that portion of our country, but also to take up the larger question of granting full powers of local government. * * * * In some respects they are not entirely clothed with the powers of provincial government, and I think we all agree that the time is close at hand when these powers must be given to them."

Replying to a question, Mr. Fielding said:—

"I do not think it would be wise that we should to-day undertake to settle the precise basis of the financial relations that should be established with the provincial Government, if it should be established next year, as I hope it will."

The quotations given above show that the Liberal Government purposes taking early action in regard to the granting of provincial powers, and that it is fully alive to the necessities of the case. They show also that while contemplating the earliest possible action, they are anxious that when the new province or provinces are established, every feature of the new arrangement shall be thoroughly satisfactory. Taking this view of the situation, the Government follow a course calculated to be in the very best interests of the Territories.

To prove this, you have but to ask yourself why there is an agitation for provincial establishment. Of course the general answer is, that as a province or provinces, the Territories would possess powers that they do not now possess. What are these powers? The most important are, a fixed subsidy and the power to borrow money. Others are, control of public lands and minerals; power to charter transporta-

tion and telegraph companies; control of asylums and such institutions; administration of justice.

THE PURPOSE AIMED AT.

Now, of these powers, are there any that it is absolutely necessary for the West to secure at once, and respecting which the delay of a year will cause it injury?

What advantage would it be to the Territories to get the administration of public lands now instead of a year hence? If they sold the lands, they would retard the progress of the country; if they kept them for homesteading, they would simply have to bear the expense of administration, of which they are now free. Examine every other power—except one—that the Territories lack; and you will find none are of a character respecting which the delay of a year will be of any significance. Most of them are really of a character that simply adds to the expense of administration, without any compensating advantage; expenses which, under existing conditions, are borne by the Dominion treasury. One power, however, that the Territories lack is important. It is the power relating to money matters. The financial needs of the West are very great, and it is most important that there should be ample funds to meet these needs. That is the real reason of the agitation for provincial establishment. All the other minor powers can be conferred at any time without making the Territories into a province or provinces. Is it for these minor powers that there is agitation? Would it be satisfactory if they, and they alone, were conferred to-morrow? Most assuredly not. The subject of finances is the one great reason for the agitation. Provincial autonomy is only a name, but financial needs and arrangements constitute a predominating fact. It can be a matter of no significance to the people of the West whether province or territory is the name, so long as they have the money to meet their needs.

Now, in any arrangement in regard to provincial autonomy, it is important that the interests of the Territories in regard to finances should be very carefully safe-guarded. The Liberal Government is determined that no injustice shall be done through hasty and ill-considered action. Therefore, they did not rush into provincial autonomy last session.

However, they recognized the necessity for careful action; they also recognized the pressing financial needs of the Territories. They, therefore, followed a course which protected the West in every way. To meet the financial needs of the West, they made the largest financial grants the Territories ever got. It is very unusual for any governmental institution to get everything it asks for, but this year, if the Capital Advance is included, the amount voted by the Liberal Govern-

ment to the Territories is actually larger than the Dominion Government asked for. That being the case, the Government has made immediate action in regard to provincial autonomy unnecessary. It has placed the Territories in the position of suffering nothing from a delay this year in regard to the subject. It has also placed the Territories in the position of having a much better chance of adequate powers being granted it when provincial establishment takes place than it would had hasty action been taken this year. It is quite evident that in this matter the course of the Liberal Government is one calculated to see that full and complete justice shall be done the West.

NECESSITY FOR CAREFUL ACTION

The necessity for very careful action in regard to provincial establishment is caused by the fact that to enter the provincial status means permanency. When a province is established, certain financial arrangements are made on the basis of population. In those arrangements are permanent. It is a well-known fact that the older provinces consider they are handicapped by the arrangements made when they were established, and are agitating for better terms. In proportion to population the Territories are very much better treated than the provinces, as is shown by the following statement of the subsidy grant per head received by each province from the Dominion:—

Ontario	\$6.60 1/2
Quebec	9.90
Nova Scotia	9.94
New Brunswick	1.40
British Columbia	1.75
Manitoba	2.08 1/2
Prince Edward Island	2.05 1/2
(1903) North-West Territories	4.47 1/2

The Territories certainly make a good showing in the above. However, their necessities are very great, and they want as much as possible. The greater their population, the more they are granted provincial rights, the greater their subsidy grant. And on account of the permanency of provincial establishment, every friend of the West should be anxious that everything possible is done to make the subsidy an adequate one. And because it desires that full justice shall be done, the Liberal party refuses hasty action in regard to provincial autonomy for the Territories.

On the other hand, what is the Conservative party doing upon this subject? It is proceeding deliberately in an effort to make the question one of party politics. The best interests of the West in regard to this subject can be conserved only by the question being kept out of

party politics, and the problems worked out by both political parties uniting in sympathetic and unpartisan efforts with respect to it. The Conservatives in the Territories last summer were the first to endeavor to drag the question into party politics. The Conservatives in the Dominion Parliament have followed suit. The course of both classes has but one object, not the bettering of the position of the Territories, but the securing of party advantage. Examine the resolutions of the Conservatives; examine their speeches; and you will find that from Mr. Borden, their leader, down, they have not expressed any willingness to make provincial autonomy a practical and reasonable proposition by expressing an adherence to terms which will make it so. The old provinces are dissatisfied with the financial arrangements under which they became provinces, and are urging re-adjustment. Premier Haultain has repeatedly declared that the question so far as the Territories are concerned, is purely one of terms. The people of the West want better terms than the old provinces enjoy. The terms that Premier Haultain considers necessary are well known. He submitted them in a draft Bill. But did Mr. Borden, the Conservative leader, express any opinion in favor of these terms? Certainly not. His speeches will be searched in vain for such an opinion.

CONSERVATIVE PROPOSITION

The Conservative proposition in regard to autonomy, as set forth in Mr. Borden's speech, was in effect as follows:—"We will give you autonomy; we will give you the lands that at present are not being sold, and which the general good of the country requires should not be sold; we will allow you to go into debt to any extent you like; but we will not say what we will give you to run your Government on. We will keep away from that subject altogether."

Premier Haultain asks, on behalf of the Territories, for a re-adjustment of the Dominion annual subsidy to the new province or provinces, every five years. This is something that none of the old provinces possess. Getting it would be acquiring something they do not possess. This and kindred questions of finance are the essential questions in regard to provincial autonomy. If provincial establishment is not going to improve the position of the Territories, then it is not worth having. But Mr. Borden carefully avoids expressing any opinion upon these questions. He says they are a matter of detail and should be left to a commission. The people of the West know that they are the all-important question. What does a general resolution from him saying the question of provincial autonomy should be dealt with forthwith, avail if he is afraid to say a word to support the West's specific claims in regard to terms? The resolution is mere bag and baggage designed to catch votes, not to help the West. The fact that this is the case is

shown by the time the Conservative resolution on the subject was introduced in Parliament. It was introduced on October 13th, after Parliament had been sitting over seven months. Can you imagine anyone consumed by anxiety to see the West given provincial rights, sit dumb on this subject in Parliament for seven months? And when, after the lapse of that time, such a person should fail to express an opinion on the essential terms of the question, even though repeatedly challenged to do so, how much of his purpose in his general talk is to secure rights for the Territories, and how much to secure advantage for his political party? Even when in the West, Mr. Borden was careful to express no specific opinions, even when questioned, as he was, for instance, at Qu'Appelle, when the question was put as to whether he thought the Territories should be compensated for the huge areas of its land given away by Conservative Governments, at Ottawa, to railway and other corporations. And this despite the fact that half the territorial land so given away was for railways not in the Territories at all. It is remarkable, indeed, to see the political party that gave away millions of the territorial lands, and which would not give Manitoba its public lands even when Manitoba was made a province, endeavoring to convince the people that it has the interests of the West at heart. Why, so far as the Territories are concerned, there would be no land at all to hand over to the province or provinces to be created, had the Conservatives remained in power at Ottawa, and continued their policy of giving away the land.

GOOD TREATMENT.

If you summarize the situation in regard to this question of provincial autonomy, you will find that the real purpose in view is to better the financial position of the Territories. You will find that for this year's needs the Liberal Government has granted to the Territories 85 per cent of their requests, and that if the Capital Advance is taken into consideration, it has granted more than has been asked for. You will find that the lack on the part of the Territories of power to borrow money is this year made up for by a capital advance of \$250,000, a sum that the Territories will not have to pay any interest upon, as they would had they ordinary borrowing powers. So far as the present year is concerned, the Liberal Government has placed the Territories in as good a position as though they were a province. By according the Territories, this year, treatment as good as they would have as a province, the Government does away with any necessity of immediate action, and gives ample time for Parliament and the country to carefully consider the terms to be granted to the new province. In the meantime, the population of the Territories will increase, and so entitle them to an increased grant. In railway and all other matters, the rights of the Territories are being carefully looked after. In no way

are the Territories suffering. The Conservative party, however, is trying to make the question one of party politics. They refuse to express any opinion in favor of the terms the West asks for, but are endeavoring to make party capital out of the question by abusing the Liberals.

With the situation as it is, there is no legitimate excuse for any agitation or criticism with respect to the present year. The face of the matter seems to be that any criticism there is comes not from the people, but from persons and organizations which have a selfish purpose to serve.

FURTHER COMPARISONS.

But it is not alone in financial matters, and in regard to self-government that the Laurier Government has shown itself in close touch with the needs and ambitions of the West. Comparison in many other matters besides these, with the Conservative party's attitude and actions, bring this fact out in strong relief. Take the matter of assistance for railway construction for instance.

Conservatives gave away huge quantities of lands of the people of the West, to aid railway construction. Liberals abolished railway land grants, and preserved the lands for the benefit of the people, and of the province or provinces to be organized in the future. Conservatives authorized, in the entire West, land grants to the amount of 56,087,072 acres, of which 29,686,826 acres have been earned. These grants resulted in even a greater amount of land being tied up to the detriment of the settler, because large areas had to be set aside for the railways to make their selections in, and kept closed till the selection had been completed. On April 30th, 1903, there were still reserved, in the Territories alone, under Conservative legislation, 36,287,937 acres of land. And on the same date patents had been issued for railway lands in the Territories to the amount of 12,115,374 acres. The Liberals, on the other hand, have taken adequate steps to ensure railway construction in the Territories, but they have not alienated the people's land therefor. They have aided these railways by cash grants and by bond guarantees. The assistance to the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific are recent examples of the latter form of assistance. In each case a transcontinental line is assured to the people of the Territories, by the Dominion guaranteeing bonds on the prairie sections to the extent of \$13,000 per mile.

TAXATION OF RAILWAY LANDS.

In connection with railway matters, it may be added that for the people of the West, the Government is bearing all the costs of two important legal actions against the Canadian Pacific Railway, one to

secure a judicial decision as to when the Government shall have power to regulate Canadian Pacific Railway freight rates; and the other to secure a decision as to what property of the Canadian Pacific Railway is taxable, and as to when the exemption from taxation, conferred on the Canadian Pacific Railway by the Conservatives, terminates. The present Minister of the Interior also undertook, and carried out, a vigorous policy with respect to the patenting of railway lands, in order to hasten the time when these lands should be subject to taxation. Previous to June 30th, 1896, there had been patented of Canadian Pacific Railway lands only, 1,351,093 acres. To March 25th, 1903, there were patented 10,565,488 acres of Canadian Pacific Railway lands. And of the total lands of all railways, there were patented:—

Previous to June 30th, 1896.....	1,829,017 acres.
Since	12,957,256 "

The more a person looks into the records of the two political parties in regard to their relations with the Territories, the more clearly he sees that the Liberal party alone has shown a correct conception of the needs of the West, and a firm determination to do everything possible to meet these needs. This subject of the dealings of the two parties with the Territories is one that cannot be discussed too freely or too often to suit the Liberal party. The greater the discussion the more convincing will be the proof that the Liberals alone have shown the West the same consideration and justice that they have shown the rest of the Dominion.

